

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
TRSE-00 MCT-01 HA-05 /072 W
-----061022 201326Z /47

R 191750Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2932
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMCONSUL TRIESTE POUCH
AMCONSUL TURIN POUCH

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: POLITICAL ROUNDUP

SUMMARY: IN A POLITICALLY ACTIVE WEEK, PARLIAMENT PASSED THE GOVERNMENT'S ANTI-TERRORISM DECREE LAW (GIVING ANDREOTTI AN EXPECTED LARGE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE) AND ENACTED LEGISLATION LEGALIZING AND FACILITATING ABORTION (THEREBY IN ALL PROBABILITY AVOIDING A DIVISIVE ABORTION REFERENDUM IN JUNE). IN PREPARATION FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON HANDLING OF THE MORO CASE, ANDREOTTI MET "COLLEGIALLY" WITH THE PARTY SECRETARIES AND OVERCAME SOCIALIST OBJECTIONS TO SIGNING A JOINT DOCUMENT OF SUPPORT THAT HAD THREATENED TO WEAKEN THE FIVE-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY. NO APPARENT PROGRESS, HOWEVER, IN SELECTING A REPLACEMENT FOR THE INTERIOR MINISTER COSSIGA (DC CHAMBER WHIP PICCOLI FORMALLY TURNED DOWN
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THE JOB). DURING THE WEEK, THE PARTIES ALSO HELD LEADERSHIP MEETINGS TO ASSESS THE UNEXPECTED RESULTS OF THE MAY 14 ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS--WINNERS AND LOSERS ALIKE STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING THE PRESENT POLITICAL FORMULA INTACT. THE DC ANNOUNCED IT WILL CONVENE ITS NATIONAL COUNCIL, JUNE 15-17 (DURING WHICH A NEW PARTY PRESIDENT WILL BE ELECTED) AND THE

REPUBLICANS WILL HOLD THEIR POSTPONED PARTY CONGRESS,
JUNE 14-18. END SUMMARY.

1. ANTI-TERRORISM AND ABORTION LEGISLATION PASSED.
WITH 522 VOTING IN FAVOR, 77 AGAINST, AND 2 ABSTENTIONS,
ON MAY 16 THE CHAMBER OF DPUTIES GAVE THE GOVERNMENT
THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE WHICH IT HAD REQUESTED TO OVER-
COME OVER 2000 MSI AND RADICAL PARTY OBSTRUCTIONIST
AMENDMENTS TO THE ANTI-TERRORISM DECREE LAW (SEE
ROME 8927). THE ASSEMBLY THEN VOTED OVERWHELMINGLY IN
FAVOR OF THE NEW NORMS TO COMBAT TERRORISM AND POLITICAL
KIDNAPPING. ON MAY 18, THE SENATE COMPLETED FAVORABLE
ACTION ON THE CONTROVERSIAL ABORTION BILL, THEREBY IN
ALL PROBABILITY OBTAINING AN IDEOLOGICALLY AND
POLITICALLY DIVISIVE REFERENDUM IN JUNE. THE SENATE
VOTE WAS 160 IN FAVOR (PCI, PSI, PSDI, PRI, PLI, AND
LEFT-INDEPENDENTS) TO 148 AGAINST (DC, MSI, DN, AND
SVP) REPLACING THE 1930 LAW THAT MADE ABORTION A CRIME,
THE NEW LAW IS CONSIDERED ONE OF THE MOST LIBERAL EXISTENT.
(SEE ROME 7130). THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE ABORTION
VOTE SEEM TO HAVE BEEN ALREADY LARGELY DISCOUNTED. AS
PART OF THE INFORMAL NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE FORMATION OF
ANDREOTTI'S NEW GOVERNMENT, THE DC HAD COME TO AN AGREE-
MENT WITH THE PRO-ABORTION PARTIES THAT IT WOULD NOT
OBSTRUCT PASSAGE OF AN ABORTION BILL. IN TURN, THE
PCI HAD AGREED (AGAINST PSI OPPOSITION) THAT IT
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WOULD NOT OPPOSE DC AMENDMENTS (PASSED BY THE
CHAMBER) THAT RAISED THE MINIMUM AGE FROM 14 TO 16.

2. COLLEGIAL MEETING AND PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON MORO
CASE: ANDREOTTI UNEXPECTEDLY MET WITH THE FIVE PARTY
SECRETARIES OF THE "PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY" ON MAY
17 TO OVERCOME SOCIALISM OBJECTIONS TO THE SIGNING OF
A JOINT DOCUMENT AT THE END OF THE PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATE ON THE MORO CASE. THE PSI OPPOSED A JOINT
"ORDER OF THE DAY" SINCE THEIR POSITION ON THE HANDLING
OF THE MORO CASE (CRAXI'S SEARCH FOR A "HUMANITARIAN
SOLUTION") DIFFERED FROM THAT OF THE GOVERNMENT
AND OTHER PARTIES WHICH FIRMLY RULED OUT ANY FORM OF
NEGOTIATIONS. THE PSI'S POSITION THREATENED TO WEAKEN
THE UNITY OF ANDREOTTI'S FRAGILE FIVE-PARTY MAJORITY.
AS EVIDENCED BY L'UNITA'S CONTINUING HEATED CONDEMNATIONS
OF CRAXI'S POSITION, THE PCI IS PARTICULARLY IRRITATED
BY CRAXI'S AUTONOMIST MANEUVERING IN THE AFTERMATH OF
THE PSI'S FAVORABLE ELECTION RESULTS. IN THE END,
ANDREOTTI REPORTEDLY WAS SUCCESSFUL IN OBTAINING THE
PSI'S SUPPORT FOR A JOINT DOCUMENT WHICH WILL STRESS
THE PARTIES' COMMON DETERMINATION TO RESIST TERRORIST

BLACKMAIL. ANDREOTTI BROKE NO NEW GROUND IN HIS ADDRESS TO THE CHAMBER ON MAY 18. WITH POLITICAL UNANIMITY WORKED OUT BEFOREHAND, THE DEBATE IS EXPECTED TO BE PERFUNCTORY. THE CHAMBER DEBATE IS EXPECTED TO CONCLUDE ON MAY 19 AND MOVE TO THE SENATE ON MAY 23.

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3. REPLACING COSSIGA: AFTER DC CHAMBER WHIP PICCOLI FORMALLY TURNED DOWN THE JOB, NO LEADING CANDIDATE HAS EMERGED TO REPLACE INTERIOR MINISTER COSSIGA WHO RESIGNED IN THE WAKE OF THE MORO ASSASSINATION. AMONG THOSE REPORTED TO BE UNDER CONSIDERATION: DEPUTY PARTY SECRETARY GASPARI (A DOROTEO); CHAMBER VICE PRESIDENT SCALFARO (A FORMER SCELBA CONSERVATIVE); FORMER PPT MINISTER ORLANDO (A DC INDEPENDENT); AND PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRIES COMMITTEE PRESIDENT MARTINAZZOLI.

4. FANFANI AND A CONTROVERSIAL MORO MEMORIAL MASS. A CONTROVERSIAL PRAYER WRITTEN BY MRS. MORO AND RECITED AT A MEMORIAL MASS IN ROME ON MAY 16 ATTENDED BY THE MORO FAMILY AND CLOSE FRIENDS OF THE SLAIN DC LEADER HAS TROUBLED AND IRRITATED DC LEADERS. MRS. MORO'S PRAYER ASKED FORGIVENESS FOR ALL THOSE WHO "RATIFIED THE DEATH SENTENCE OF AN INNOCENT MAN WHETHER THROUGH

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JEALOUSY, WICKEDNESS, FEAR OR STUPIDITY." IN VIEW OF THE MORO FAMILY'S OPEN BITTERNESS TOWARD THE DC, PARTY OFFICIALS HAVE PRIVATELY CRITICIZED FANFANI'S PROMINENT ATTENDANCE AT THE MASS. FANFANI'S DETRACTORS CHARGE THAT THIS AND OTHER RECENT DEMONSTRATIONS OF CLOSENESS TO THE MORO FAMILY WERE POLITICALLY MOTIVATED.

5. PARTY LEADERSHIP MEETINGS ASSESS LOCAL ELECTIONS. LEADERSHIP DIRECTORATES OF THE VARIOUS PARTIES MET DURING THE WEEK FOR A PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF THE UNEXPECTED MAY 14 LOCAL ELECTION RESULTS (THE PCI DIRECTORATE IS MEETING ON MAY 18-19). DC PARTY SECRETARY ZACCAGNINI DESCRIBED THE DC'S SUCCESS AS "ENORMOUSLY COMFORTING" AND THE PSI AND LAY PARTY RECOVERY HIGHLY IMPORTANT. THE PARTY WARNED AGAINST A "TRIUMPHANT" ATTITUDE, HOWEVER, AND SAID THAT THE GREATEST WINNER IN THE MAY POLLING WAS ITALIAN DEMOCRACY. THE OTHER PARTIES SHARED THE DC'S CONCERN THAT THE PCI'S ELECTORAL SETBACK NOT DISRUPT THE EXISTING POLITICAL FRAMEWORK. THUS, ALTHOUGH THOSE PARTIES SUCCESSFUL AT THE POLLS ARE OBVIOUSLY PLEASED WITH THE RESULTS, THEY ARE NOT CROWING VERY LOUDLY.

6. DC NATIONAL COUNCIL AND PRI PARTY CONGRESS SET: THE DC DIRECTORATE ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT THE LONG-DELAYED NATIONAL COUNCIL (EQUIVALENT OF PCI CENTRAL COMMITTEE) WILL MEET JUNE 15-17. THIS WILL PROVIDE THE OCCASION FOR A DETAILED EXAMINATION OF THE PARTY'S POSITION IN THE LIGHT OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT FORMULA, THE LOSS OF MORO'S LEADERSHIP, AND THE LOCAL ELECTION RESULTS. THE FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS WILL BE THE ELECTION OF A NEW PRESIDENT TO SUCCEED ALDO MORO. IN ALL LIKELIHOOD THE PRESIDENCY WILL REVERT TO ITS TRADITIONALLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CEREMONIAL ROLE. THIS IS INDICATED BY THE WIDESPREAD CONSENSUS FOR THE ELECTION OF SENATOR GUIDO GONELLA, A 75-YEAR OLD FATHER-FIGURE AND ONE-TIME PARTY SECRETARY (1950-53). IN THEIR DIRECTORATE MEETING, THE REPUBLICANS DECIDED TO CONVENE THEIR POSTPONED PARTY CONGRESS, JUNE 14-18. GARDNER

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